



## State Reptile: Arizona Ridgenosed Rattlesnake



SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Crotalus willardi willardi*

DESCRIPTION: A small snake up to 25 inches in length. Body pattern consists of large brown or red-brown patches separated by narrow, light bands. Underside is creamy to white and often stained with dark to reddish-brown that gets darker down the length of the snake. Young snakes may have yellowish tails that fade to an olive gray or brown shortly after the second shed. Unique ridge of upturned scales on the tip of the snout between the nostrils. Often has a bold white stripe on face.

RANGE: South-central Arizona and southwestern New Mexico, south into Sonora. Found primarily in the mountains in the southeastern part of Arizona. Occurs at elevations of 4,800 – 9,000 feet, but most often found at 5,400 – 7,500 feet.

HABITAT: Rock crevices on forest and woodland floors in oak woodland to pine-fir forests. Sometimes found in high grasslands bordering the woodlands.

DIET: Carnivore. Eats various rodents, lizards, snakes, birds and arthropods, including centipedes. Relies on venom to kill its prey.

ACTIVITY PERIOD: Generally secretive. More likely to attempt escape rather than strike if encountered.

REPRODUCTION: Mate in midsummer to early fall. Brood size averages between five and six young in late July to late August.

STATUS: Protected in Arizona. Habitat is threatened by illegal collecting, mining, recreational development and woodcutting.

Arizona Game and Fish Department. 2001. *Crotalus willardi willardi*. Unpublished abstract compiled and edited by the Heritage Data Management System, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Phoenix, AZ. 5 pp.

Photo: G. Andrejko